

Please amend the application as follows:

In the Claims

Please cancel Claims 53-62 without prejudice.

Please amend Claims 41 and 45 as follows:

41. (Thrice Amended) A method of identifying an agent which enhances the activity of an [isolated] caspase or procaspase expressed in immature thymocytes, or an active derivative or fragment thereof, wherein said caspase is necessary for apoptosis, comprising the steps of:

- (a) contacting [the] an isolated caspase or procaspase, or an active derivative or fragment thereof, with a caspase substrate in the presence of the agent; and
- (b) identifying enhancement of caspase or procaspase activity.

45. (Thrice Amended) A method of enhancing the activity of an [isolated] caspase or procaspase expressed in immature thymocytes, or an active derivative or fragment thereof, wherein said caspase is necessary for apoptosis, comprising contacting [said] an isolated caspase or procaspase with an agent that enhances the activity of the caspase or procaspase.

Please add the following new claims:

---64. The method of Claim 41, wherein the enhanced procaspase or caspase activity results from prolonging the duration of the activity.

65. The method of Claim 41, wherein the enhanced procaspase or caspase activity results from increasing the amount of procaspase or caspase.

66. The method of Claim 65, wherein the increased amount of caspase results from increased conversion of procaspase to caspase.
67. The method of Claim 65, wherein the increased amount of caspase results from increased oligomerization of the caspase.
68. The method of Claim 45, wherein the enhanced procaspase or caspase activity results from prolonging the duration of the activity.
69. The method of Claim 45, wherein the enhanced procaspase or caspase activity results from increasing the amount of procaspase or caspase.
70. The method of Claim 69, wherein the increased amount of caspase results from increased conversion of procaspase to caspase.
71. The method of Claim 69, wherein the increased amount of caspase results from increased oligomerization of the caspase.---

REMARKS

Prior to entry of this Amendment C, Claims 41, 45 and 53-63 are pending in this application. No claim is allowed.

In this Amendment, Claims 41 and 45 have been amended, Claims 53-62 have been cancelled and new Claims 64-73 have been added. The cancellation and amendment of the claims is for the purpose of more particularly pointing out and clarifying the subject matter which Applicants regard as their invention, and for the purpose of expediting prosecution. The cancellation and amendments should not be construed as agreement with or acquiescence to any of the pending rejections.

Support for the amendments and new claims can be found throughout the specification, the claims and the figures as originally filed. Specifically, support for the amendments to Claims